I finish reading to myself *Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan*** which we had begun reading aloud.

4

May

After a night of frightful insomnia, got up this morning more excited than tired.

5

May

Stayed so long at Aunt Charles's that I missed a wonderful sunset. As soon as I come in at rue de la Tour, she begins talking of her troubles. She is ill, yet talks only incidentally of her health and interminably of Gerard.

"What did he do yesterday? He drank six cups of coffee. He opened his law book and closed it saying: [tf]Oh! I can't work today/ He thumbed through the *Revue des deux mondes,* then dropped the issue on the table with the remark: TSTothing interesting/ Finally he went out, suddenly, as if he couldn't resist any more. Where was he going? . . . Even his father, Andre", even his father, who never pays attention to anything, asked: What's the matter with him this evening?' "

I hoped to find him at rue de la Tour, where I arrived in time for dinner. He is dining at Robert Burnand's. Very eager to see him, for he had seemed to me to be falling back into the dumps the day before yesterday, I get away from my aunt's without dining and am off to catch him at rue de Varenne.

In the metro wrote a scene of my novel; read some of *Le Memorandum* (the second one) by Barbey. Wonderful the way he makes use of the *intoxication of sobriety.*

Gerard, who disposes of the will of others even more easily than of his own, decides that I shall go with him at midnight to meet Copeau in Roggers's dressing-room. I raise as objections my fatigue and my need to work, but to no avail; and, indeed, discovering that *The Wild Duck*

is being played at Antoine's theater, to which I should not have felt like going but for their urging, but which I do want to see, I walk along the boulevards with the young men (they leaving me for *La Dame de chez Maxim's*[80]).

I planned to stay only a moment at Antoine's, drop Gerard, Roggers, etc. . . . but that strange play gripped me just as on the first seeing. I am unable to leave.

In the local train taking me back to Auteuil.

This is, I believe, the first time I have ever ditched anyone. I was to

[29] One of Balzac's novels that he classified among the *Scenes of Parisian Life.*

&t> *The Lady from Maxim's,* a popular light comedy by Georges Feydeau, first played in 1899. *The Wild Duck* is, of course, Ibsen s famous play.